

# Dragonshards

## The Warforged, Part One

By Keith Baker



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In this age of tenuous peace, the warforged are a constant reminder of the Last War. These living constructs are described in detail in [Races of Eberron](#). The next two Dragonshards expand on the material in *Races of Eberron*, looking at specific aspects of warforged history, physiology, and psychology.

### Aaren d'Cannith: Father of the Warforged

The name that most people associate with the warforged is that of Merrix d'Cannith. This man developed the first of the creation forges, and his warforged titans were the first of the sentient constructs. As brilliant as Merrix II was, it was his son Aaren who created the first truly living constructs. Born into an age of war, Aaren was a philosopher as well as an artificer. While his father worked on weapons, Aaren studied the nature of life itself, seeking ways to breathe true consciousness into metal and stone. Many ridiculed his ideas until his work bore strange fruit. Using a modified creation forge, Aaren blended a diverse range of materials and techniques to create an entirely new form of construct. Aaren's creations were capable of independent, creative thought, and even emotional behavior. These were the first true warforged.

The warforged possessed many advantages over traditional constructs. Aaren had incorporated organic material into their design, binding steel and stone together with a flexible material similar to the roots of livewood trees. These binding roots could be rapidly grown within a creation forge, reducing the cost of production; they also responded to traditional healing magic, though these spells were not as effective on the warforged as they were on creatures of flesh and blood.

Aaren was a dreamer, who sought to unravel the mysteries of life. But his father had other plans for his son's inventions. Here was the tireless soldier the house had been seeking. Merrix adapted the creation forges to use Aaren's designs, and soon the house was producing platoons of armored constructs, which were indoctrinated into service as soon as they emerged from the forges. During this time, the term "warforged" was coined, since Merrix sought to hammer a martial purpose into these constructs from the moment of birth. Aaren protested what he saw as the abuse and enslavement of his creations, but his pleas were ignored. In 970 YK, Aaren was exoriated -- formally disinherited from House Cannith. Merrix d'Cannith adopted his grandson, who was also named Merrix; in time, this boy would become House Cannith's Baron of Sharn.

Following his expulsion, Aaren disappeared. His fate remains a mystery, and diviners and inquisitives have found no traces of him. Most believe that Aaren is long dead, but a number of conflicting stories present other possibilities. Some say that Aaren still wanders the world, and that he is doing what he can to help warforged adjust to a life of peace. Others say that he went mad, and that he has entered the service of the sinister Lord of Blades. According to these tales, the Lord of Blades has salvaged a creation forge in the Mournland, and Aaren is using it to produce strange new warforged. And then some others claim that Aaren IS the Lord of Blades -- that he has crafted a suit of armor that makes him appear to be a warforged, or that he has found a way to transfer his consciousness into a warforged body. The truth is for the DM to decide, but should Aaren still live, an encounter with the legendary artificer could have important consequences for any warforged characters.

## Warforged Composition

Warforged are formed in the creation forges, which channel the powers of Cannith heirs to produce effects similar to *major creation* and *fabricate*. The materials of the warforged are not truly natural; this is reflected by the ability of a warforged juggernaut to change its shape over time (growing spikes), or the fact that an armorer can repair a mithral warforged even when he doesn't have any mithral on hand. An important side effect of this is that if material is removed from the body of a warforged, it quickly degrades. As a result, stripping a warforged and selling its metal is impossible; a warforged may have adamantine components, but these will rust and pit when they are pulled from the warforged.

The warforged are made using a blend of materials. The core of a warforged is a frame formed from wood, stone, or metal. Bundles of rootlike fibers surround the core and serve as the muscles of the construct. Plates of steel and wood are fused over this layer of tendrils, forming the hard outer shell of the warforged. The precise appearance and construction of the body depends on the model of the warforged, as represented by its initial feats. This also affects the weight of the warforged, as shown below.

**Composite Plating:** A warforged with the default composite plating has a base height of 5'10", with a +2d6 height modifier, base weight of 270 pounds, and weight modifier of x4.

**Adamantine Body:** Its base weight is 320 pounds, with a weight modifier of x6. While adamantine itself is no heavier than steel, a warforged with this feat is typically more massive than other models, with more steel and stone in its construction.

**Darkwood Body or Mithral Body:** Its base weight is 180 pounds, with a weight modifier of x2. These materials are unusually light, and these warforged tend to be lean and flexible.

**Unarmored Body:** Its base weight is 225 pounds, with a weight modifier of x3. A warforged with this feat is covered with composite plating, but these plates are extremely thin and do not interfere with movement or spellcasting.

## Insignia

After emerging from the forge, most of the warforged were marked with symbols indicating the military specialty and national allegiance, so soldiers could identify their allies on the battlefield. In the years following the war, most warforged have had these insignia removed. However, some have left these symbols intact out of indifference or nostalgia. A character can identify warforged military insignia with a successful Profession (soldier) or Knowledge (history) skill check (DC 10). These symbols can be altered or concealed with the Disguise skill, or removed by any armorsmith.

## The Ghulra

Composition and insignia are elements that many warforged may share. But every warforged has one unique feature: the sigil engraved on its forehead. These symbols are as individual as human fingerprints, and if a warforged possesses the ability to cast *arcane mark*, its personal mark will be the same as the sigil on its forehead. These symbols were not designed by human hands. When Aaren d'Cannith's first construct emerged from the creation forge, it bore a symbol on its forehead, and the second had a different sigil. Aaren's dedicated dwarven magewrights called these symbols "ghulra," a Dwarven word for "truth."

Warforged adopt names to deal with humans, but when dealing with each other, the ghulra serves as an important form of identification. A warforged may wear a hood to conceal its forehead from strangers, but when among friends most prefer to leave the symbol visible. While someone could gouge away the symbol, the ghulra is a part of the warforged in a way nobody truly understands; when someone uses *repair* or *cure* spells on the warforged, a damaged ghulra is restored to its original shape. While it cannot be permanently destroyed, a warforged can cover its ghulra or may choose to use Disguise to place a false mark over its real one.

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## About the Author

**Keith Baker** has been an avid fan of **Dungeons & Dragons** since grade school. His life took a dramatic turn in 2002 when he submitted the world of Eberron to the Wizards of the Coast Fantasy Setting Search. In addition to developing the **Eberron** Campaign Setting and *Shadows of the Last War*, he has worked for Atlas Games, Goodman Games, and Green Ronin.

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